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ABSTRACT

In April 1999, the Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs established a subgroup to develop a national youth development strategy. Youth development is about helping young people make the transition to happy, productive, and successful adulthood through the guided provision of opportunities to try new things, to learn skills, to ease the school-to-work transition, and to grow as individuals and as members of the community. Interest in a national youth development strategy arose from several successful community-based cadet-style programs in some Australian states and territories. Youth development encompasses a broad range of activities, but the focus of the subgroup is on traditional military-style cadet programs, which provide training in specific skills, opportunities to develop personal characteristics and talents, and opportunities to provide community service in a structured environment. The Australian Commonwealth will provide leadership in the development of community-based youth development programs that will build on existing successful initiatives; share information on best practice through newsletters and conferences; promote a sense of national cohesion for youth development while acknowledging local variations; develop core training units for which participants will receive accreditation upon completion; seek corporate sponsorship; and organize national and state forums. From these cadet-style programs, a broader range of youth development activities could grow. (TD)

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Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)

NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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DECISIONS BY MINISTERS MARCH 2000

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA):

- endorsed the concept of youth development as a positive approach to young people's needs
- noted the background paper and endorsed the strategy to develop and expand community-based youth development programs through the package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth and with the objectives outlined in the National Youth Development Strategy background paper
- noted the development of the national package of coordination and facilitation measures, funded by the Commonwealth
- noted that Ministers may consider whether current or future initiatives in their jurisdiction may be appropriately classified as youth development activities for the purpose of inclusion in the National Youth Development Strategy
- noted that Ministers may consider the appropriateness of community-based youth development programs for implementation in their jurisdiction.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The sub-group of the MCEETYA Youth Taskforce defined youth development as:

> A process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models, which focus solely on youth problems.

Young people need some guidance as they seek out their place in the world. They need opportunities to try new things, to learn, to make mistakes and try again—to develop as individuals and as members of the community. A central aim of youth development activities is the provision of these opportunities and guidance. Youth development is about helping young people to make the transition to being happy, productive and successful adults.

CADET PROGRAMS

Interest in a National Youth Development Strategy has developed from the community-based cadet-style programs implemented, with considerable success, in a number of States. The development of these programs is detailed in more depth in the accompanying background paper.

Youth development encompasses a broad range of activities, including learning specific vocational skills, acquiring life skills, developing positive personal characteristics, community service, and acquiring some experience of the world. A wide range of initiatives which could be classified as youth development activities already exist. These include the Green Corp program, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the Australian Services Cadets Scheme (ASCS), and State or Territory supported programs such as Police and Citizens' Youth Clubs.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to classify some of these development activities under a National Youth Development Strategy. However, States and Territories may choose to undertake some youth development activities without linking those activities to a national strategy.

One current focus of attention is cadet-style programs. Again, it is possible for these schemes to cover a very wide range of initiatives. Three critical elements need to be present for an initiative to be considered a cadet-style program: training aimed at developing specific skills, opportunities to develop personal characteristics and talents, and an opportunity to provide some kind of community service.

The degree of emphasis placed on each of these elements may vary, depending on the type of cadet program. Interest is currently focused on community-based cadet programs, which place a high level of importance on community service and participation. Although priority is being given to the establishment and expansion of such programs, future cadet initiatives may encompass a broad variety of programs.

For example, both ASCS units and Green Corps units could be classified as cadet-style programs, although they are very different. Both provide training around specific skills, both provide opportunities to develop characteristics such as leadership and the ability to work well as part of a team, and both provide opportunities for individuals to contribute something to the community as a result of their work in the unit.

The MCEETYA Youth Taskforce sub-group defined the critical characteristics of a successful community-based cadet program as:

- voluntary participation
- structured environment
- providing a sense of identity through shared experience, values and goals
- supported by a host organisation by way of an agreement
- formal recognition of progression through skill acquisition levels
- providing leadership development opportunities
- individual development within a team environment
- inclusive ethos
- connecting young people with their communities.

Cadet-style programs are only one element of youth development. However, they can be an important strand which can reach a broad cross-section of young people and make a significant difference to local communities. From this element, a broader range of youth development activities and a comprehensive national youth development strategy could grow.

THE STRATEGY

Some States and Territories have chosen to develop cadet-style programs as a significant element of their youth development strategies, while others are directing their main efforts elsewhere. It is also important to note that where a State or Territory has not adopted cadet programs as a formal youth development activity, organisations within that jurisdiction may wish to offer cadet-style programs. Major community organisations may wish to develop links with the National Youth Development Strategy with or without the formal support or involvement of their State or Territory Government.

As can be seen in the accompanying background paper, many jurisdictions are already well advanced in the development or implementation of cadet-style programs. It is likely that other jurisdictions already have in place initiatives which could be classified as cadet-style youth development activities.

The basic elements of existing programs can be applied nationally to achieve the goal of establishing a youth development strategy that meets the needs of the various jurisdictions, as well as having a national identity, profile and standing in the community.

We suggest that the package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth be used by all jurisdictions as an opportunity to re-examine existing activities. The Commonwealth will fund a national coordination unit to provide national leadership in the development of community-based youth development programs. This will build on the successful initiatives already introduced in a number of States and Territories. The unit will assist established programs to expand and develop, and will support the introduction of new programs; for example, by sharing information on best practice through newsletters and conferences. It will promote a sense of national cohesion for youth development, while acknowledging State and Territory differences and subsequent variations; for example, by promoting national badging of youth development activities, seeking corporate sponsorship and organising national and state forums. In addition, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) will develop a package of core training units so that participants will receive accreditation for their achievements in relation to core activities such as leadership. States and Territories may wish to consider implementing this package in a wide range of programs.

A National Youth Development Strategy could provide a framework to add value to successful existing programs at the State and Territory level by addressing issues such as sponsorship, training, accreditation and coordination.

OBJECTIVES OF A NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The objectives of a National Youth Development Strategy are to:

- provide a focus at both the national and State and Territory levels which highlights the benefits to be gained from structured youth training and development programs
- identify core goals and good practice for particular types of youth development activities, and to encourage organisations to adopt these goals and practices where appropriate
- foster a sense of national cohesion, while acknowledging that circumstances and needs vary between locations and providing opportunities to address these
- identify existing programs that have as their central theme the provision of youth development opportunities through structured training (eg Scouts, Guides, St John Ambulance and Surf Life Saving)
- identify community-based organisations (at the national and State and Territory levels) that could host and deliver a youth development program that incorporates the core training and activity objectives
- identify potential funding sources (eg corporate sponsorship).

Should the development and expansion of community-based cadet programs (supported by the package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth) prove successful, Ministers may wish to expand the National Youth Development Strategy to cover a wider range of activities which more comprehensively address the needs of young people. Youth development activities aimed at young people with particular needs, such as those with experience of homelessness, substance abuse problems or learning difficulties, may also be beneficial.

MAJOR MILESTONES

- MCEETYA endorsed National Youth Development Strategy March 2000.
- National coordination and facilitation services commenced from April 2000.
- ANTA National Project to explore accreditation and recognition issues in youth development reports October 2000.
- MCEETYA to consider the progress of the development of community based youth development programs (including the coordination and facilitation services) and to discuss next steps in early 2001.

INTRODUCTION

Background

At the tenth meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), held in Adelaide on 22-23 April 1999, council members, in response to a proposal from Western Australia, decided to support the establishment of a sub-group convened by Western Australia 'to develop a national youth development strategy and report to Ministers later in 1999'.

The Western Australian proposal stemmed from the successful Cadets WA program introduced into that State's high schools and colleges in 1996.

The establishment of State-based youth development programs has re-focused interest in the opportunities and benefits offered by such programs. These include providing young people with greater personal development, transition from school to work and citizenship opportunities by improving linkages between young people, schools and the community.

Youth development encompasses a wide range of activities, including cadet-style programs, personal development programs, skills development opportunities, and activities designed to provide additional assistance to young people who face particular difficulties or disadvantages. This paper focuses on cadet-style activities which place particular emphasis on personal development and basic skills development, and which target a broad cross-section of young people.

Current activities

Cadets WA

The Cadets WA program has evolved from the traditional Services cadet model. One of the most distinguishing features has been the expansion in the number of cadet types to include a range of State-based community service organisations. These include the:

- Western Australian Police Service (Police Rangers)
- Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM Bush Rangers)
- St John Ambulance (St John Ambulance Cadets)
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority (Emergency Services Cadets)
- Red Cross (Red Cross Cadets).

The program is exclusively school-based and funded by the Western Australian Government and administered by the Office of Youth Affairs.

The State and the Commonwealth Government (Department of Defence) entered into a joint funding agreement in 1998. This funding agreement stems from the Commonwealth Government's pre-election commitment to provide an additional $3 million for Service cadet training in Australia. This funding was made available to the States and Territories on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

As a result of this agreement, existing Australian Services Cadet Scheme (ASCS) units in Western Australia can access State funding under the Cadets WA program by affiliating with a school.

Victorian Youth Development Program (VYDP)

The Victorian Youth Development Program (VYDP) was introduced in 1997 and participation is open to all government secondary colleges. The program is administered by the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training and is also totally funded by the Victorian State Government.

The VYDP has enjoyed remarkable success and in 1999 involved over 3100 participants in 107 colleges. The Victorian Government recently announced an increase in funding of $5 million over the next four years.

Colleges participating in VYDP are able to establish partnerships with one of 13 community organisations, including Scouts Australia and Guides Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Surf Lifesaving Victoria, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, and the Department of Defence through the ASCS.

Students have the chance to participate in a variety of community service activities while undergoing personal development in areas such as leadership, self-discipline, teamwork and responsibility. All participants gain accreditation in first-aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Youth Action Program (Queensland)

The Queensland Youth Action Program was launched in 1998 and offers a broad range of training options for high school students in years 8-12. The program has been designed to promote:

- skills acquisition
- leadership
- individual responsibility
- teamwork

- community service
- self-reliance.

The program was piloted in 1998 in ten schools, and in 1999 an increased number of schools have been invited to participate. The range of programs available is similar to the Western Australian and Victorian models.

A steering committee chaired by Olympic gold medallist, Glynis Nunn-Cearns OAM, has been established to assist and oversee the development and implementation of the program.

South Australia

South Australia has recently announced a voluntary two-year youth development program that will be open to years 9 and 10 students, and to 15 to 19 year-old school leavers. The South Australian Government has committed $4.4 million to the scheme which will incorporate, amongst other service providers, Surf Life Saving, the Country Fire Service, the State Emergency Service, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Service cadets. It will consist of a two-part program:

- core skills development, including communications, leadership and team building
- community service, through partnerships with youth and community organisations.

Other States and Territories

Other jurisdictions including the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory have expressed interest in establishing similar programs. Cadet-style programs operate in most States and Territories under the auspices of the ASCS or community organisations. These programs may not have the formal endorsement or support of government.

Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Government has recognised the value of the cadet-style programs introduced by States and Territories. In order to support these programs, the Commonwealth has sought tenders from organisations to provide a package of coordination and facilitation services to assist in the development of State- and Territory-based cadet programs. An important part of this package will be developing a sense of national cohesion and consistency among the different programs, while allowing them to develop in ways that meet the unique needs of each jurisdiction. It is expected that this package will be implemented from April 2000.

The Commonwealth has an interest in a wide range of youth development programs, including activities such as Green Corp, the National Youth Roundtable, the Rock Eisteddfod, and the Commonwealth Battle of the Bands. The Commonwealth would like to develop stronger links between the varied youth development programs at both Commonwealth and State and Territory levels to ensure that young people are offered the widest possible range of opportunities.

TOWARDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Establishment of a sub-group

A sub-group of the MCEETYA Youth Taskforce was established to develop a National Youth Development Strategy. All jurisdictions were invited to nominate representatives. Additionally, representatives from the Commonwealth Departments of Defence and Family and Community Services were invited to attend as observers.

The inaugural meeting of the sub-group was held in Perth on 16 July 1999.

Role and purpose

The sub-group's role was to 'develop a National Youth Development Strategy which considers and incorporates the requirements and objectives of each jurisdiction in the area of youth development to ensure the strategy is applicable and relevant to each jurisdiction while still maintaining a national perspective'.

Within this context the sub-group's purpose was 'to bring together representatives from the various States, Territories and the Commonwealth to develop a National Youth Development Strategy'.

Process

At the Perth meeting an action plan for the development of the strategy was agreed. It subsequently proved necessary to amend this plan-for example, it was not possible for Ministers to consider the draft strategy at the National Youth Development Conference in October 1999.

The strategy was drafted by members of the sub-group and was considered by the MCEETYA Youth Taskforce on 17 February 2000. The Taskforce agreed that the strategy should be presented to the MCEETYA for endorsement.

Focus

The strategy outlines principles which should underpin, at a national level, the development of

cadet-style programs in States and Territories. The strategy is deliberately framed to encourage national consistency without unduly limiting the ability of States and Territories to recognise the unique needs of their own jurisdictions.

The strategy is focused on a particular type of youth development activity—cadet programs. These programs encourage participation by a broad range of young people, and have a particular emphasis on personal development and the acquisition of basic skills. The principles which underpin this type of youth development activity may also apply to other activities.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT –A NATIONAL STRATEGIC APPROACH

Advantages of youth development programs

Research has shown that:

> *... all young people have basic needs that are critical to survival and healthy development. They include a sense of safety and structure; belonging and membership; self-worth and an ability to contribute; independence and control over one's life; closeness and several good relationships; and competency and mastery. At the same time, to succeed as adults, all youth must acquire positive attitudes and appropriate behaviours (sic) and skills in five areas: health; personal/social; knowledge, reasoning and creativity; vocation; and citizenship* (from *Making the case: Community foundations and youth development* by Bonnie Politz, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, 1996).

Youth development programs aim to help young people deal successfully with the challenges of adolescence and prepare them for the independence and responsibilities of being adults, parents, workers, and citizens, by developing key 'competencies'.

These programs tend to have a non-academic focus, with group and/or one-to-one activities, which may include:

- ethics
- leadership development
- building resiliency
- community service and volunteerism
- after school programs
- vocational training.

Formal evaluation and anecdotal evidence has shown that the developmental opportunities offered by cadet-type or similar youth training as offered by established youth development organisations such as the ASCS, Scouts and Guides, and St John Ambulance Cadets fulfil most, if not all, of the above needs.

Relevance of a National Youth Development Strategy

While highly successful, these programs offer only one segment of the youth development spectrum. Broader-based youth development programs would provide opportunities and greater appeal for participation by an increased number of young people. It may also be appropriate to consider the role of youth development activities which are aimed at young people with particular needs, such as those with experience of homelessness, substance abuse problems, or learning difficulties.

A National Youth Development Strategy is required if a broader approach is to be implemented. The basic elements of existing programs can be applied nationally to achieve the goal of establishing a youth development strategy that meets the needs of the various jurisdictions, as well as having a national identity, profile and standing in the community.

A National Youth Development Strategy would provide a framework that will add value to successful existing programs at the State and Territory level by addressing issues such as sponsorship, training, accreditation and coordination.

Value adding

State and Territory Governments could undertake implementation of the strategy at the local level by identifying existing (or developing new) programs which meet the guidelines outlined in this paper. A number of States have already taken this path and have had significant success in the process. A national focus will further the progress of youth development by 'value-adding' in areas such as:

- consistency between jurisdictions
- shared understanding of youth development
- greater ability to attract corporate sponsorship
- better and more coordinated use of resources
- a higher profile for youth development activities.

Resources

The resources available are limited and will dictate matters such as the number of participants in programs. Demand may well exceed the number

of places available. Competing priorities and demands on resources may further limit the ability of some jurisdictions to provide their young people with the opportunities this type of program offers.

Investment in positive programs that encourage young people to achieve their potential can possibly save considerable resources that would otherwise have been spent addressing youth problems or correcting anti-social behaviour.

Sponsorship and funding

A program with a national identity, profile and standing in the community would be attractive to prospective corporate sponsorship (particularly large nationally-based corporations) and other national funding sources. This has the potential to alleviate some of the limitations noted above.

Accreditation

The training and skills gained through the existing youth development programs are relevant and applicable to general community life as well as to prospective employers. The process of accreditation and recognition of prior learning can be a costly and time-consuming process. State and Territory–based programs may need to be accredited individually, thereby incurring costs and inefficiencies that could be minimised if a national approach was taken.

Evaluation

A vital component of any national youth development strategy should be provision for the collection of bench mark and best practice data to assist in the evaluation of programs that may result from the implementation of the strategy. Data collection sets should include core indicators such as participation levels, school retention rates, continuation of links with the host organisation after school and the impact on employment.

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

Mission statement

The MCEETYA Youth Taskforce Sub-group derived the following mission statement for the National Youth Development Strategy.

The strategy should lead to:

> A Commonwealth/State/Territory initiative, in partnership with community organisations, which provides opportunities for young Australians to develop skills to benefit themselves and their communities.

Objectives

The objectives of a National Youth Development Strategy are to:

- provide a focus at both the national and State and Territory levels which highlights the benefits to be gained from structured youth training and development programs
- identify core goals and best practice for particular types of youth development activities, and encourage organisations to adopt these goals and practices where appropriate
- foster a sense of national cohesion, while acknowledging that circumstances and needs vary between locations and providing opportunities to address these
- identify existing programs that have as their central theme the provision of youth development opportunities through structured training (eg Scouts, Guides, St John Ambulance and Surf Life Saving)
- identify community-based organisations (at the national and State and Territory levels) that could host and deliver a youth development program that incorporates the core training and activity objectives
- identify potential funding sources (eg corporate sponsorship).

STRATEGY CONTEXT

Common starting point

A range of youth development programs are currently operating in all States and Territories-these include Scouts, Guides, St John Ambulance Cadets and the ASCS. These provide a common starting point for any national youth development strategy/program. This paper focuses on youth development activities which use the cadet unit model, and which aim to involve a broad range of young people and provide them with the opportunity to develop basic, general skills.

Only the ASCS is funded and supported nationally by the Commonwealth Government (through the Department of Defence). The Commonwealth Government provides approximately $13 million per annum for cadet training. An additional $3 million (on a dollar-for-dollar basis) is available from the Commonwealth, through the Department of Defence, for the establishment of additional school-based ASCS units. Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland have established school-based community cadet programs with links to the ASCS.

Other programs tend to be administered and funded at the State and Territory level, although

broad policy direction may be provided at the national level. Funding is provided by way of government grants, community support, fund raising and subscriptions.

Building on this common link, a National Youth Development Strategy should outline a framework and direction that is flexible enough to meet the needs of individual jurisdictions, but also allows an identity to emerge that links all participants.

This can be achieved by:

- identifying existing programs (both nationally and at the State and Territory levels) that have as their central theme the provision of youth development opportunities through structured training (eg Red Cross and Surf Life Saving)
- determining whether these programs have common core training courses or activities
- identifying community-based organisations which could host and deliver a youth development program that incorporates the core training and activity objectives
- determining cost structures and potential funding sources (eg corporate sponsorship).

In December 1999 the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) initiated a project to identify a package of core training units which would be appropriate for use by all cadet–style units. This package will utilise existing training units which are accredited, and which will assist young people in achieving a qualification. It is expected that this package of core training units will be ready for use by June 2000.

In December 1999 the Commonwealth sought tenders to provide a package of coordination and facilitation services to support the national development of cadet–style programs. It is anticipated that the successful tenderer will begin work around April 2000. The project will take 12 months.

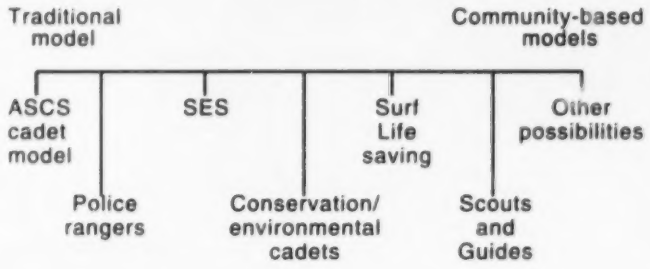
Activities that will be undertaken by the successful tenderer include developing good practice documentation for cadet-style programs, encouraging community organisations to participate in cadet–style programs, seeking corporate sponsorship, and providing a national direction to assist with the establishment and expansion of cadet–style programs.

Once agreed by Ministers, the principles of a National Youth Development Strategy, as set out in this paper, will guide the development of cadet–style programs.

Options

The diagram below illustrates that there is a broad spectrum of options available-ranging from traditional cadets to community-based programs, including Surf Life Saving, Scouts and Guides and beyond.

Cadet/youth development program spectrum



Key components

State focus

While the National Youth Development Strategy will provide a national perspective and opportunities for further expansion, each State and Territory should maintain control over its respective youth training and development programs to ensure they continue to meet local requirements.

Training accreditation

A key objective of the National Youth Development Strategy is the development of young people through accredited training and activities. In this context it provides an opportunity to integrate community service and training options to develop and attain particular skills and competencies that meet the requirements of the host organisation. The accreditation of such training should be sought collectively at a national level to avoid duplication of process and unnecessary cost. Wherever possible, existing accredited training units which build towards a formal qualification will be used.

Core elements

Each program should have the following core elements:

- leadership
- initiative
- personal development
- responsibility

- volunteerism
- community service
- skill acquisition
- team building.

Equity and accessibility

The National Youth Development Strategy must be widely accessible to enable young people of diverse backgrounds and abilities to participate.

STRATEGY CHARACTERISTICS

A National Youth Development Strategy should have the following characteristics:

- voluntary participation
- structured environment
- providing a sense of identity through shared experience, values and goals
- supported by a host organisation by way of an agreement
- formal recognition of progression through skill acquisition levels
- providing leadership development opportunities
- individual development within a team environment
- inclusive ethos
- connecting young people with their communities.

Through these characteristics it will be possible to link the strategy to a wide range of existing national and State and Territory priorities and policies that address issues such as equity, participation, students 'at risk' and the transition from school to work. However, it is important to recognise that cadet-style youth development programs will not meet the needs of all young people. Other programs will still be required.

While most youth development programs are 'non-academic' in their delivery, there are clear opportunities (as shown in the States and Territories where community-based programs already exist) to include such training in the school curriculum, thereby complementing and supporting existing education programs in the areas of outdoor education, citizenship, physical education, and vocational education and training in schools. The package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth will include an examination of ways to integrate cadet activities with the school curriculum.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Sub-group

The MCEETYA Youth Taskforce sub-group is responsible for the development of the National Youth Development Strategy. Within this context, the sub-group's purpose is 'to bring together representatives from the various States, Territories and the Commonwealth to develop a national youth development strategy'.

Stakeholders

State and Territory jurisdictions

State and Territory Ministers for Education, and Ministers for Youth will be responsible for:

- endorsing the National Youth Development Strategy
- promoting the strategy to the community, young people and potential sponsors
- identifying community organisations that could participate as 'hosts' in a youth development program
- developing a plan of action leading to the implementation of a youth development program at the local level
- supporting a national youth development focus.

Commonwealth Government

The key Commonwealth Departments are Defence; Education, Training and Youth Affairs; and Family and Community Services. The respective Ministers will be responsible for:

- endorsing the National Youth Development Strategy
- encouraging all States and Territories to support the strategy
- promoting the strategy to the community, young people and potential sponsors
- identifying nationally-based community organisations that could participate as 'hosts' in a youth development program
- providing leadership to ensure a sense of national consistency underpins the varied approaches that may be adopted by States and Territories.

Young people

As the main beneficiaries, young people should be encouraged to participate in youth development programs which are appropriate to their needs. This can be achieved by identifying and promoting the benefits to be gained by participating in the training and the scope of activities offered through various youth development programs.

Young people develop in a positive environment that:

- satisfies their need for physical activity
- encourages responsibility
- integrates them socially with adults and peers
- sets parameters
- provides and encourages opportunities to gain knowledge.

Young people also need to be provided with the opportunity to direct and control their activities and environment. It is therefore important that they have a voice in both the design of youth development programs and their day-to-day operations.

Host organisations

The state-based youth development programs identified in this document have developed strong relationships with a range of public and community organisations. These organisations, in their role as 'hosts', contribute an identity for the cadet units, and provide a structure, training, support and resources to deliver the training and activities that foster skills and good citizenship in young people.

These organisations benefit from the energy and enthusiasm that young people bring to bear on their involvement, and from the time that participants devote to community service activities under the auspices of the host organisation. Many community organisations which rely upon the assistance of volunteers are facing the difficulty of reduced numbers of volunteers with less time to devote to community activities. Community-based cadet programs offer the potential to interest young people in the work of an organisation, and possibly gain their long-term support as volunteers.

The three branches of the Australian Defence Force have taken on this host role for the relevant ASCS units. The relationship between the relevant services and ASCS units is a long-established one which works well.

A broader-based youth development program with a national focus would require linkages to be made with other community and service organisations that have a national charter or are representative of state-based operations. These could include, for example, the Australian Federal Police, Australian Customs, Australian Red Cross and St John Ambulance. Some of these organisations are already involved in youth development activities at the local or State and Territory level.

The potential to include other service organisations-public and community-at the national and State and Territory level is high and will be pursued as part of the package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth.

As noted earlier, one benefit of involving young people in community-based programs is the possibility that they will join service organisations either as employees or as volunteers when they become adults. Organisations such as the State Emergency Services depend heavily on adult volunteers to enable them to conduct their invaluable community service.

Community

A significant contributor to the success of the State and Territory-based programs has been the establishment of close links with the general community. This has taken a multitude of forms ranging from the involvement of school communities, including parent groups, and service organisations such as Rotary and Lions in the activities of cadet units, to the involvement of individual volunteers who have committed time and effort to train, supervise and mentor young people.

This level of participation and commitment from the community will need to be expanded to ensure the various development programs implemented have the support and resources required to achieve their activity and training objectives. It is important that plans to foster community involvement pay attention to the sustainability of that involvement; for example, too great a reliance on too few volunteers can result in 'burn-out'.

The successful implementation of the strategy will require a plan to include and nurture broad-based community involvement and support at the local level.

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

Western Australia has taken responsibility for the appointment of a market researcher to conduct a series of focus group meetings to develop a name or title for the strategy/program. Sub-group members expressed a desire for the focus groups to reflect the views of a broad cross-section of clients, and not the views of any one jurisdiction. This project has been deferred, and may be revisited as part of the package of coordination and facilitation services designed to assist the national

development of cadet programs.

The development of an appropriate logo has been deferred until after the name or title has been determined.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Various aspects of the development of State- and Territory-based cadet programs, and of the national coordination of these programs, will provide opportunities for media announcements. These opportunities may include the launching of good practice documentation, the introduction of the package of core training units, and the signing of corporate sponsors.

A strategy will be developed by the Commonwealth, in conjunction with State and Territory Governments, to ensure these opportunities are maximised, and managed in a cohesive manner.

Public announcements about the National Youth Development Strategy and the national program will be managed through a media plan.

Media plan

The objectives of a media plan would include:

- promoting the concept of a National Youth Development Strategy
- promoting the essential elements inherent in the various youth development programs in existence
- promoting, in particular, the benefits of cadet-style youth development activities
- outlining the commitment of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to youth development
- identifying public announcements that can be made.

POTENTIAL SPONSORS

A key advantage of a national youth development program is that it is likely to appeal as a worthwhile sponsorship opportunity to nationally-based corporations. The majority of existing programs do not have a national identity and are therefore unlikely to attract the interest of major national sponsors to enter into a long-term sponsorship arrangement.

Potential corporate sponsors by industry-sector include:

- banking and financial services
- communications
- media
- information technology
- resources and mining
- sporting organisations.

Each jurisdiction will need to provide input to the development of any sponsorship guidelines to ensure there is no conflict with existing guidelines governing the receipt of funds from corporate and benevolent organisations.

Seeking and obtaining corporate sponsorship is envisaged as an important part of the package of coordination and facilitation services funded by the Commonwealth.

THE NEXT STAGE–A NATIONAL PROGRAM?

The sub-group members decided not to pursue the development of a national youth development program prior to the approval of the strategy by the Ministerial Council.

The progression of the strategy to program stage would require the following issues to be addressed:

- program ownership and authority (including accountability for funding)
- sponsorship and funding
- promotion and publicity
- administrative structures
- aims, goals and objectives
- performance indicators and evaluation-to be incorporated at the local level
- activities and programs.

It is also important to note that this paper has focused on a particular type of youth development activity (cadet-style programs). A national youth development program would be far broader than a national cadet-style program. Elements such as the name or title, objectives and performance indicators would need to be formulated in a way which recognises this.

A critical element in a national program is the involvement and agreement of all jurisdictions-Commonwealth and all States and Territories. As States and Territories are at different stages in the development of cadet-style programs, some discussion and negotiation would be required to increase consistency. The package of coordination and facilitation services could be used to promote greater parity between States and Territories by assisting those which are less advanced in the development of these programs to 'catch up' to States and Territories with longer-standing programs.

These issues were not considered to be part of the sub-group's brief as determined at the MCEETYA meeting of 22-23 April 1999.

APPENDIX

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